



KM in Practice

The Office of the Acquisition Executive (AE) and the Knowledge Laboratory (KL) Project

Mitigating Knowledge Loss Due to Workforce Attrition Among Contracting Officer's Representatives (COR)

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Discussion

DIA Knowledge Laboratory

- Knowledge Laboratory Introduction
- Knowledge Laboratory Business Model
- KM in Practice: Knowledge Lab-AE Project
- Recommended Next Steps

Introduction — Knowledge Lab (KL)



DIA Knowledge Laboratory

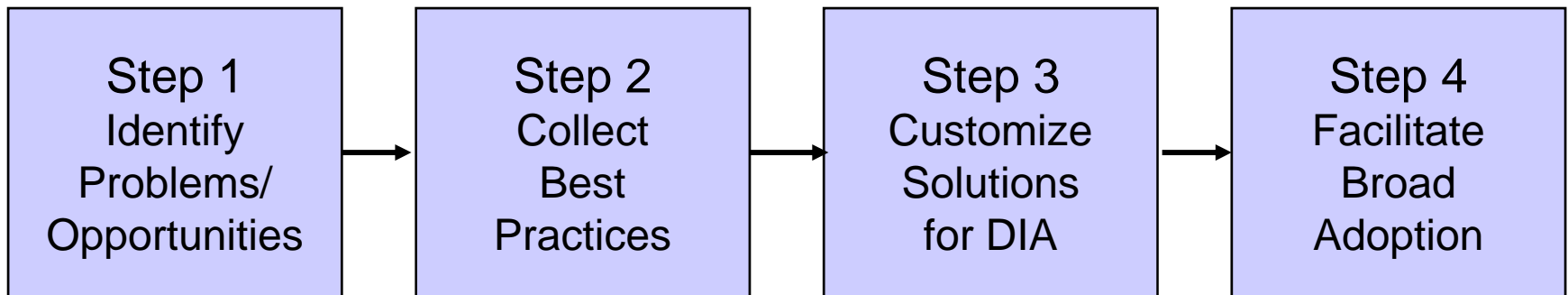
- Knowledge Lab Mission: Help DIA become a highly networked, knowledge-based organization – imperative from 9/11 attacks
"How do we become something we're not?"
- Key Issue: Increase collaboration and knowledge integration to improve mission performance across DIA
- Key Challenge: **To become a learning organization DIA needed to:**
 - Change behaviors in order to improve results
 - Reorient to "knowledge" as DIA's primary "product"
- Key Operating Concept: Facilitate change at DIA
 - Linked to the Command Element, not to a line organization
 - Focused on behavior change at practice level using pilot projects
 - Networked volunteer operation with minimal staff and funding



A New Model to Achieve the Mission

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- Strategy: Develop capabilities to address unmet “knowledge-related” needs by asking questions that had not been asked
- Required creating a new 4 step process model to achieve KL goals





A New Model to Achieve the Mission

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Identify Issues/Problem/Opportunities

Step 1
Identify
Problems/
Opportunities

- Discover important, unresolved, practice-level challenges
- Initial focus areas/opportunities gathered from internal and Strategic Planning documents as well as Leadership and Employee Discussions including:
 - Analytic tradecraft
 - Organizational boundary spanning
 - Interpersonal communication
 - Networking
 - Impact of culture
 - Knowledge integration



A New Model to Achieve the Mission

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Step 2 Collect Best Practices

Search the commercial, academic, and government sectors for practices that have been successfully used against similar challenges

Step 3 Customize Solutions for DIA

Evaluate and adapt a technique(s) for application in the DIA culture

- Find internal clients who want to use their people to test the technique

Step 4 Facilitate Broad Adoption

Iterate the technique and, where successful, institutionalize it

- Find the right process owner to transition

Define the Project Challenge



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- Loss of critical knowledge due to COR turnover created challenges in managing contractor performance
 - COR performance is impacted
 - COR job experience is negative
- COR operating environment
 - CORs have regular turnover
 - Practical training could be better
 - Getting up to speed quickly is necessary
 - CORs have multiple jobs and responsibilities
 - CORs are not connected to each other
 - Real time knowledge sharing is minimal at best
 - It's sometimes hard to find help when it's needed



Identify Applicable Approaches

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- Search for proven Knowledge Management techniques to address customer challenge
 - Fast Learning (Learning before, during, after)
 - Communities of Practice (Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Sharing Networks)
 - Knowledge Assets (Web-based Repositories of Critical Knowledge)

Tailor and Test Solutions



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- Approach:
 - Define the problem through individual/group interviews
 - Understand dynamics of COR environment (context and mission)
 - Engage CORs and their key stakeholders
 - Use *Fast Learning* techniques to capture COR knowledge, experience, lessons, insights, and advice
 - Organize these “key learnings” by themes for easy access by CORs
 - Produce a shared, web-based COR knowledge repository’ (knowledge asset)
 - Begin conversation about how collaboration and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing networks among CORs can improve outcomes

Project Key Learnings



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- CORs are critical to mission success
- Being successful as COR requires a diverse skill set
- COR training needs to focus more on the practical execution of the COR role *in the DIA context*
- Regular Contracting Officer (CO)-COR communication and interactions are critical to identifying and resolving issues before they become problems
- CORs are looking for ways to more effectively collaborate — online and in person — to improve performance

Project Key Learnings (continued)



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- The invoicing process is critical and resolving invoicing process challenges is a priority
- Developing guidance and checklists for key contracting documents, and process maps for essential COR processes can enhance the efficiency and consistency of how things get done
- All developed guidance, templates, and process maps need to be organized in a single, easily accessible location and kept current
- CORs and their stakeholders see value in getting together periodically to review recent performance, address emerging issues, and share better practice

Recommended Next Steps



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- Leverage and build upon what was learned
 - Regular conversations between CORs
 - Regular conversations between CORs, COs, and Support staff (FE, Security, etc)
 - Connect and share knowledge and online
 - Listing of CORs/Staff Support/COs and areas of COR/other expertise
- Make sharing of “better” practices a part of COR operations
- Address practical challenges in promoting knowledge sharing behavior
 - COR training enhancements
 - Mapping COR processes
 - Creating and sharing useful templates and checklists
 - COR networking and collaboration (Community of Practice)
 - Fast Learning understanding and use